

Contentment

Text : **Phil 4: 10-19**

INTRODUCTION :

S#1.

A. We live in the most prosperous country in the history of the world.

S#2.

1. Poverty in U.S. is defined as \$ 23, 550 for a family of four. (*only 15% below it*)

- a. China defines poverty as \$ 744 for a family of four.
- b. India defines poverty as \$ 338 for family of four.
- c. The United Nations defines poverty as \$ 391 per year for one person.

2. Minimum wage in Illinois is \$66 per eight hour day. (*\$17, 160 annual*)

S#3.

- a. 30% of workers in China work for less than \$2 day.
- b. 87 % of workers in India work for less than \$2 a day.
- c. Over 1.3 billion workers make less than \$1.25 per day.

3. More than 1/3 of all the wealth in the world is concentrated in the U.S.

S#4.

B. In spite of all this wealth, we live in an era characterized by discontentment.

1. For two generations we have been taught that happiness is measured in things.

a. We can't comprehend people being happy without "*the amenities of modern life.*"
(House, Car, Entertainment devises, Air-conditioning, etc.)

b. Many measure other's success by the things that they possess. (*House, car ...*)

c. Jesus instructed us, "**not even when one has an abundance
does his life consist of his possessions.**" **Luke 12: 15b**

2. We feel entitled and protest most vigorously when we feel deprived.

(*There was a time when Americans were concerned about their duty,
but now days they are concerned about their rights.*)

C. Discontentment is a multi-BILLION dollar industry in the U.S.

S#5.

1. The goal of advertising is to make us discontented with our lot in life.

- a. You will only be happy when you get this new car.
- b. Your house is uninhabitable unless you clean it with this product.
- c. No one will like you the way you look so you must buy this product.

2. Contrary to scripture, advertising encourages us to compare ourselves to others.

S#6

II Cor. 10: 12 – **For we are not bold to class or compare ourselves with some of those
who commend themselves; but when they measure themselves by
themselves and compare themselves with themselves, they are
without understanding. Someone always has more than us and ...**

By this lesson we'll establish that contentment is an essential element of **S#7.** the Christian character which must be such a part of the Christian's thinking that it affects his lifestyle. We will look at four different places it is taught.

I. Be contented with your wages.

S#8.

S#9.

- A. **Luke 3: 14** – Some soldiers were questioning him, saying, “And what about us, what shall we do?” And he said to them, “Do not take money from anyone by force, or accuse anyone falsely, and **be content with your wages.**”

B. High pay does not create satisfaction.

1. Americans are among the most highly paid workers in the world and least contented.
 - a. The average income in the U.S. is \$44, 600.
 - b. The least a fulltime worker can make in this country is \$17, 160.
2. The union autoworkers in Detroit average making over \$100,000 per years.
 - a. The total cost to employ an auto worker is \$73 per hour. (*wages, benefits, taxes*)
 - b. Yet they go on strike every three years demanding more, more, more.

C. Contentment doesn't come naturally; it's the nature of man to want more. S#10.

1. No matter how much we have we want more.
2. Sin came into the world because Eve wanted more.
 - a. She had every fruit in the world except one and she was persuaded to want it.
 - b. Rich men never have enough, they always want a little more.
 - *c. My rich uncle said he didn't want all the land, just what bordered his farm.
3. Workers justify employee theft because they think they are not paid enough.
4. People quit their jobs and move their families to get a little more money.

D. Scripture commands Christians to be content with the wages God has given them

II. We are commanded to be content with what you have. (*overcome nature*) S#11.

S#12.

- A. **Heb. 13-5-6** Make sure that your character is free from the love of money, being **content with what you have**; for He Himself has said, “I will never desert you, nor will I ever forsake you,” ⁶ so that we confidently say, “The Lord is my helper, I will not be afraid. What will man do to me?”

B. This is a direct empirical command from God.

1. God will never command what we cannot accomplish. (*Requires effort*)

2. THEREFORE, being discontented is sin, it is rebellion against God. **S#13.**
3. Having strong desires for earthly things is idolatry.

Col. 3: 5 – Therefore consider the members of your earthly body as dead to immorality, impurity, passion, evil desire, and greed, which amounts to idolatry. (*Replaces God as ruler of*)

C. Discontentment reflects a lack of faith in God.

1. God owns and controls all. **Psa. 24, 50** *He can give to whom He chooses.*
2. God has promised to provide for our needs. **Luke 12: 22-32**
 - a. People of the world worry themselves about things of the world.
 - b. Jesus tells His followers to be different, to seek HIM first and trust Him to provide.

D. Our faith is tested by our attitude toward our circumstances. (cf.–James 1) **S#14.**

1. God is aware of our circumstances and can change them at any time.
 - a. We aren't privy to God's plans for our life. *Why's God doing this to me ?*
 - b. We need the faith of Joseph. **Gen. 50: 20** ... You meant it ... but God meant it ...
2. Faith will motive us to trust His providential oversight of our lives. **S#15.**

Rom. 8: 28 – We know that God causes all things to work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to His purpose.
3. Promise : For He Himself has said, "I will never desert you, nor will I ever forsake you,"

III. Godliness is only possible when one is contented.

S#16.

S#17.

- A. I Tim. 6: 6-11** But godliness actually is a means of great gain when accompanied by contentment. ⁷ For we have brought nothing into the world, so we cannot take anything out of it either. ⁸ If we have food and covering, with these we shall be content. ⁹ But those who want to get rich fall into temptation and a snare and many foolish and harmful desires which plunge men into ruin and destruction. ¹⁰ For the love of money is a root of all sorts of evil, and some by longing for it have wandered away from the faith and pierced themselves with many griefs. ¹¹ But flee from these things, you man of God, and pursue righteousness, godliness, faith, love, perseverance and gentleness.

B. Contentment is not relative to abundance.

1. Necessities are defined as food and clothing.
 - a. This does not refer to stylish clothing or changes of clothing, just covering.

Exod. 22: 26-27 ... A poor man's cloak could not be taken as collateral because he had only one. *If you can cover your body, be content.*

- b. This does not refer to an ongoing supply of food, but food for today.
Matt. 6: 11 – Give us this day our daily bread. If you can eat today, be content.
- 2. Jesus didn't have a house. (**Matt. 8: 20**) He didn't have a car or even a horse.
- ** 3. *Discontentment does not stem from circumstances, but from within the heart.* **S#18**
 - a. We must learn to moderate our desires. (*Food & Clothing*)
 - b. We must supplant earthly desires with spiritual desires.

IV. Contentment is a learned attitude and behavior.

S#19.

S#20.

- A. **Phil. 4: 9-13** The things you have learned and received and heard and seen in me, practice these things, and the God of peace will be with you. ¹⁰ But I rejoiced in the Lord greatly, that now at last you have revived your concern for me; indeed, you were concerned before, but you lacked opportunity. ¹¹ Not that I speak from want, for I have learned to be content in whatever circumstances I am. ¹² I know how to get along with humble means, and I also know how to live in prosperity; in any and every circumstance I have learned the secret of being filled and going hungry, both of having abundance and suffering need. ¹³ I can do all things through Him who strengthens me.
- B. **Discontent is an attitude and attitudes are NOT controlled by circumstances.**
 - 1. Other attitudes foster discontentedness, e.g., envy, pride, etc.
 - 2. Attitudes are developed so they can be changed with effort and determination.
 - 3. The Apostle said he **learned to be content** regardless of his circumstances.
 - a. He came from a wealthy family and had a prestigious position before conversion.
 - b. He was writing to the Philippians while being imprisoned in Rome. (*not like U.S.*)
- C. **Being contented didn't motivate Paul to reject the gift given by the church.**
 - 1. Contentment is not blind surrender ... "Whatever happens, happens."
 - 2. **I Thes 2: 9, II 3: 7-10** ... The Apostle worked night and day when it was necessary.
 - *3. *Contentment is confidence in God's control and in His love rather than in things.* **S#21.**
- D. **Like it's cousin, worry, discontentedness bears no good fruit.**
 - 1. It won't lighten the burdens of life.
 - 2. It won't make the rough patches any smoother.
 - 3. It won't make a bitter cup any sweeter or a dark place any lighter.
 - 4. It doesn't make a sore sorrow any less sore or life's thorns less painful.

V. Having wealth is not a sin, but it's both a temptation and a ministry.**S#22.****S#23.**

- A. I Tim. 6: 17-19** Instruct those who are rich in this present world not to be conceited or to fix their hope on the uncertainty of riches, but on God, who richly supplies us with all things to enjoy. ¹⁸ Instruct them to do good, to be rich in good works, to be generous and ready to share, ¹⁹ storing up for themselves the treasure of a good foundation for the future, so that they may take hold of that which is life indeed.

B. God is reliable, but riches are uncertain.

1. Even the strongest economies will collapse.
2. Riches bring neither peace nor security, **but a snare of the devil.**
 - a. Those who have treasures must constantly be on guard against losing them. **S#24.**
Matt. 6: 19-21 Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy, and where thieves break in and steal. ²⁰ But store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys, and where thieves do not break in or steal; ²¹ for where your treasure is, there your heart will be also. **S#25.**
 - b. **Eccl. 5: 10-12** He who loves money will not be satisfied with money, nor he who loves abundance with its income. This too is vanity.... ¹² The sleep of the working man is pleasant, whether he eats little or much; but the full stomach of the rich man does not allow him to sleep.
 - c. No matter how much a man gets, it is never enough. (*Ahab – Naboth's vineyard*)
3. Those who trust the Lord have both peace and security.

C. Wealth can be a ministry if one is strong enough in faith to be contented.

1. Ephesus was one of the richest cities in the empire.
2. Tell them to use their wealth for other, rather than self. (*provides opportunity to serve*)
3. **Rom. 12: 8, 13** ... Some have the gift of giving.
(*Bro. Prince took a modest loving and gave all ... retired in small house on SS only.*)

S#26.**VI. There are seven lessons we need to teach our children about things. I Tim 6****A. Vs. 7 Things are only temporary.****S#27.**

1. We came into the world naked and we will leave the same way.
2. Take the kids to the dump to see all the treasures left there.

B. Vs. 8 Only seek necessities and wait for the rest.

1. Americans don't want to wait for anything. (*Not even marriage*)

2. We rack up enormous credit card debt because we don't want to wait.
(*Our nation acts just like we act as individuals, the government spends on credit.*)

C. Vs. 9 Don't desire to be rich.

1. Many very rich men are in jail because they desired more & more.
2. The desire for more is addictive behavior. (*Rich men make deals on death beds*)

D. Vs. 11 Flee materialism (*Run to God.*)

1. Because desire for things is addictive, we must FLEE from it. (cf. – **II Tim 2: 22**)
2. Pursue righteousness, godliness, faith, love ... *go on a opposite course.* Alt. values

E. Vs. 12 Cling to eternal life

1. Oppose the worldly values ... seeking things ... fulfilling desires, etc.
2. Publically pursue your goal of eternity with God. *Not just an empty dream.* I hope I ..
3. Vs. 19 – *ready to share, 19 storing up for themselves the treasure of a good foundation for the future, so that they may take hold of that which is life indeed*

F. Vs. 17 Pin your hopes on God

1. Don't fix your “.. *hope on the uncertainty of riches ..*” “I hope I saved enough ...”
2. **Luke 16: 19f** ... The only person in the bible who retired went to hell the next day.

G. Vs. 18 Give until it hurts

1. Use all things as tools to serve God. (*Parable of talents. Opportunity / responsibility*)
2. *Do good, be generous, share, ...*

CONCLUSION :

A. The result of contentment :

1. You can enjoy the present without worrying about the future.
2. You will be liberated to truly enjoy the success of others.
3. It will enable God to build within you a true sense of gratefulness.
4. Knowing that you already have more than you need, you'll be more compassionate.

B. Do you have peace and contentment in your heart ?

S#28.

1. It is found only in faith.
2. Surrender your life to God and entrust Him to care for you.

Lesson Text :**Philippians 4: 10-19**

10 But I rejoiced in the Lord greatly, that now at last you have revived your concern for me; indeed, you were concerned *before*, but you lacked opportunity. **11** Not that I speak from want, for I have learned to be content in whatever circumstances I am. **12** I know how to get along with humble means, and I also know how to live in prosperity; in any and every circumstance I have learned the secret of being filled and going hungry, both of having abundance and suffering need. **13** I can do all things through Him who strengthens me. **14** Nevertheless, you have done well to share *with me* in my affliction.

15 You yourselves also know, Philippians, that at the first preaching of the gospel, after I left Macedonia, no church shared with me in the matter of giving and receiving but you alone; **16** for even in Thessalonica you sent a *gift* more than once for my needs. **17** Not that I seek the gift itself, but I seek for the profit which increases to your account. **18** But I have received everything in full and have an abundance; I am amply supplied, having received from Epaphroditus what you have sent, a fragrant aroma, an acceptable sacrifice, well-pleasing to God. **19** And my God will supply all your needs according to His riches in glory in Christ Jesus.